

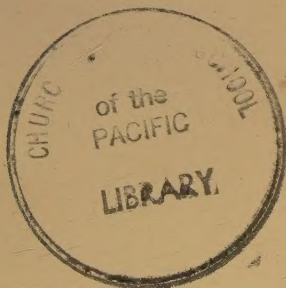
A

GUIDE FOR SEMINARIANS

BY

WM. WALTER WEBB, M.A., B.S.

Vol. C. 29-



NEW YORK

JAMES POTT & CO., PUBLISHERS

14 AND 16 ASTOR PLACE

1887

COPYRIGHT, 1887, BY
WM. WALTER WEBB.

WP3

W368

Press of J. J. Little & Co.
Astor Place, New York.

To four friends, now called to the high dignity of the priesthood, who while at the Seminary were a daily source of comfort and help to the Author, this book, on the life we were striving after, is dedicated.



Preface.

THIS little book aims to fill what the author during his own seminary course felt to be a want, and as far as he knows is not supplied by any book written for the use of those in the Anglican Communion.

There are, it is true, many most helpful books on the spiritual life, but they are written with the intention of helping laymen, and do not enter into the especial needs or temptations of one studying for the priesthood. Besides, it seems as if more than mere spiritual advice was needed. Certain practical ideas have been added which the author's needs and the observation of others' needs at the seminary have suggested.

The larger part of the book, that touching the spiritual life, is little more than a compilation from various writers on ascetical theology. The source of the thoughts is given, even in some cases where the exact words could not be used, and a list of editions has been appended from which the quotations are made, that there may be no difficulty in finding them, should one so desire.

It has been thought that it might be helpful to place after each chapter a list of books or articles on the subjects treated in the preceding chapter; where it has been possible, the current price of the book has been added.

The one end and object of this guide is to increase the spiritual life and zeal of those studying for the priesthood,

to foster the sacerdotal spirit, to help us to save our own souls as well as the souls of those over whom God has placed us.

WM. WALTER WEBB.

Presbytery of the Church of
the Evangelists, Philadelphia.
Octave of Whitsun Day, 1887.

EDITIONS OF WORKS QUOTED.

- Addresses to Candidates for Ordination, by Wilberforce. N. Y., 1861.
Aids to Meditation. Cresswell. London.
Ascetical Works of S. Alphonsus. Centenary ed. N.Y.
Commentaria in Scripturam Sacram. A Lapide.
Paris, 1874.
Directorium Asceticum, by Scaramelli, translated by Manning. Lond., 1879.
Doctrine of the Real Presence, from the Fathers. Pusey. 1855.
Directorium Sacerdotale. Valuy. N. Y., 1882.
Enchiridion Clericorum. Dublin, 1882.
✓ Eternal Priesthood. Manning. Baltimore, 1883.
Eucharistical Adoration. Keble. London, 1872.
Evening Communions. Liddon. 2d ed., Lond., 1876.
Forbes on the Thirty-Nine Articles. Lond., 1878.
Light of the Conscience. Lond., 1879.
Life of Monseigneur Dupanloup, by Abbé Lagrange.
Transl. by Lady Herbert. Lond., 1885.
Hooker's Works, ed. by Keble. Oxford, 1874.
✓ Memoriale Vitæ Sacerdotalis. Arvisenet. Transl. by Bishop Forbes. London, 1882.
Personal Christian Life in the Ministry. Huntington. N. Y., 1884.
Priest in his Inner Life. Liddon. Lond., 1874.
S. Augustini Opera. Migne's ed., Paris, 1837.
S. Athanasii Opera. Bend. ed., Paris, 1698.
S. Basilii Opera. Bend. ed., Paris, 1721.
S. Bernardi Opera. Bend. ed., Paris, 1667.
S. Gregorii Opera. Bend. ed., Paris, 1675.
S. Chrysostomi Opera. Bend. ed., 1718.

S. Ignatius. Clark's ed., Edinburgh, 1867.

S. Thomæ Aquinatis Summa. Paris, 1885.

Spiritual Instructions on the Religious Life. Carter.
Lond., 1879.

Tertullian. Clark's ed., Edinburgh, 1869.

Vows and the Religious Life. Carter. Lond., 1881.

Zeal in the Ministry, by l'Abbé Dubois, trans. by Lian-
court, 4th ed., N. Y.

Works of Jeremy Taylor. Lond., 1880.

Growth in Holiness. Faber. Baltimore.

Contents.

	PAGE
The Priesthood.....	I
Vocation.....	4
The Celibate Life.....	8
The Religious Life.....	13
Spiritual Reading.....	16
Meditation	20
Prayer	25
The Holy Communion.....	31
Self-Examination.....	36
A Rule of Life.....	40
Ascetic Practices.....	43
Study	47
Habits of Life.....	52
Lay Reading and Mission Work	58
Vacations.	60
Ordination and Beginning Work.....	63

Confession 65

A GUIDE FOR SEMINARIANS.

The Priesthood.

“Is not God alone the Father of spirits? Are not souls the purchase of Jesus Christ? What angel in heaven could have said to man, as our Lord did unto Peter—‘Feed my sheep; preach; baptize: Do this in remembrance of me: Whose sins ye retain they are retained; and their offences in heaven pardoned whose faults you shall on earth forgive’? What think ye? Are these terrestrial sounds, or else are they voices uttered out of the clouds above?”

“The power of the ministry of God translateth out of darkness into glory; it raiseth men from the earth and bringeth God himself down from heaven by blessing visible elements; it maketh them invisible grace; it giveth daily the Holy Ghost; it hath to dispose of that flesh which was given for the life of the world, and that blood which was poured out to redeem souls; when it poureth malediction upon the heads of the wicked, they perish; when it revoketh the same, they revive.”* Such are the words of one who is considered the most conservative and thoughtful of English theologians, the judicious Hooker. Can any words express the dignity and responsibility of the priesthood? It is the very perpetuation of our Lord’s ministry on earth, the means by which the Incarnation is made of avail to individual souls; in it is continued the prophetic, the kingly, the priestly office of our Lord as far as it is administered on earth.

The priest is doing on earth what our Lord Jesus is doing in heaven. “But one sacrifice has forever redeemed

* Hooker’s Polity, V. LXXVII. I. vol. ii. 456.

the world, and is offered continually in heaven and on earth ; in heaven by the only Priest, before the Eternal Altar ; on earth by the multitude and succession of priests who are one with Him as partakers of His priesthood."* Jeremy Taylor, in his *Holy Living*, brings out the same idea in the clearest way ; he says, "As Christ is pleased to represent to His Father that great sacrifice as a means of atonement and expiation for all mankind, and with special purposes and intendment for all the elect, all that serve Him in holiness ; so He hath appointed that the same ministry shall be done upon earth too, in our manner and according to our proportion, and, therefore, hath constituted and separated an order of men, who, by 'showing forth the Lord's death,' by sacramental representation, may pray unto God after the same manner that our Lord and High Priest does ; that is, offer to God, and represent in this solemn prayer and sacrament Christ as already offered ; so sending up a gracious instrument, whereby our prayers may, for His sake, and in the same manner of intercession, be offered up to God in our behalf, and, for all them for whom we pray to all those purposes for which Christ died."†

S. Chrysostom sums up the power of the priesthood as two-fold, the consecration of the Holy Eucharist, and the absolution of sin, in other words, the jurisdiction over the natural, and over the mystical body of Christ.‡ If we only realized what it means, the priest of the most high God, the steward of his mysteries, the one set in His place to teach. Nay, more, set in His place to judge, to condemn, or to acquit. His representative to His people, the one to whom souls, the dearest thing in God's sight, are committed, and of whom they will be required in the day of judgment, whose acts affect not time, but all eternity ; not the salvation of his own soul, but the souls of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of his fellow men.

* The Eternal Priesthood, 12.

† *Holy Living*, Chap. IV. X. 4, vol. i. 497.

‡ *De Sacerdotio*, iii. 4, 5.

Look up into our Lord's face as He hangs upon the cross on the first Good Friday, see what it cost to redeem the world, and remember, O priest, that you may make that sacrifice of none effect to many perishing souls, or, blessed privilege, you may be the means of applying that blood for the washing away of many sins. No dignity, no power, no office, no position, no stewardship on earth so great as that of the priesthood, no one so much to be envied as a holy priest, no one so much to be despised as an unholy priest ; as the reward of the one will be great, so surely will the punishment of the other be awful.

BOOKS ON THE PRIESTHOOD.

Manning's Eternal Priesthood,	. . .	50 cts
Carter's Doctrine of the Priesthood,	. . .	\$1.50
Chrysostom, On the Priesthood (translation by Cowper).		

Vocation.

WHEN we think of what a great and wonderful office the priesthood is, which S. Ambrose calls "a Godlike profession,"* dare we enter it without the most serious intentions, without a call from God, a feeling that that alone is our vocation! We have in the most solemn manner, in the presence of God, and of His holy Angels, to affirm that we are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon us this office to serve God for the promoting of His glory and the edifying of His people.†

Zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, that and that alone, must be the moving cause in our mind if we desire the office of a priest; we must be willing to endure, to undergo anything which will attain that end, and we are called upon to give up and put aside whatever may interfere with or hinder the salvation of a single soul.

Surely I am not to be a priest that I may take the first place in the house of God; I am not to be a priest that I may occupy a parsonage in idleness; I am not to be a priest that I may hold a good social position and take part in the festivities of the neighborhood; I am not to be a priest because my parents or my clergy desire it; I am not to be a priest because the church will educate me and give me a profession by which I may live and bring up a family; I am not to be a priest because it will give me a chance to study or to teach; I am to be a priest because God calls me to serve Him; if I am a priest for any other reason, there is danger that I may lose my soul.‡

Our object is the love of God and the love of souls;

* De Dig. Sac., 2.

† Office for the Ordering of Deacons.

‡ Zeal in the Ministry, 17.

we cannot love one without the other, and our zeal will be exactly in proportion to our love ; we must be able to say with S. Peter, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee ;" and there will come back that tender answer, "Feed my lambs." *

"Love does great things and counts them small, does many things and counts them few." Each man has his vocation, it is that design for him which lay in the Eternal Mind before he was born ; if we pray earnestly that we may know what it may be in our case, God will tell us whether He has chosen us to be one of His priests.

There are in all our lives important crises when decisions must be made as to what is our duty, "when the truth forcibly presents itself to us that one thing only is worth knowing, and that is God's will in our regard, and one thing only is entirely worth the doing, and that is obedience to that will." † Arvisenet, in his *Memoriale Vitæ Sacerdotalis*, sums up in a few words the whole question.

"*The voice of the Disciple.* It is true, O good Lord. The wish to serve Thee in the priesthood presseth upon me, but how to do it I find not, except Thou invite and teach me. Vouchsafe, therefore, to make Thy will known to me, O my God ; show me whether Thou hast chosen me.

"*The Voice of the Beloved.* By the following means, My son, thou mayest know My will and thine own calling. Above all seek, ask, knock. Retire awhile into solitude, so that there, seriously examining thyself, and being apart from earthly things, thou mayest ask of Me the more devoutly, and the more attentively listen to My answers, and because that I am wont to lead men by means of men, seek thou advice from some wise and holy man.

"Have nothing before thine eyes, My son, except My glory and thine own salvation. Consider what state thou wouldest wish that thou hadst observed, if thou

* S. John, xxi. 17.

† Grafton on Vocation, 121.

wert just about to die. Diligently observe all the gifts of thy mind, all the inclinations of thy heart. Consider whether they be such as the holy and high estate of the priesthood requireth, such as the perilous duty of a pastor of souls demandeth. If thou acknowledge thyself disposed and led by an inward inclination to undertake them; if above all thy bishop call thee and wish to receive thee to the ministry, then know, My son, that My will is made manifest unto thee; then promptly, without any further hesitation or delay, give thyself to thy calling.

"Despair not, be not faint-hearted, but trust, not on thyself, but on Me, who will work in thee." *

The following are the principal signs of a true vocation :

"I. A good intention, that is, the intention to embrace such a state only to please God and to arrive more surely at the haven of salvation.

"II. The inclination and aptitude to exercise the duties proper to this state.

"III. The knowledge of the duties this state imposes and the firm will to fulfil them to the end.

"IV. That there is no grave impediment, such as the great poverty in which one might leave one's father and one's mother.

"V. The favorable counsel of a wise director." †

One thing is certain, "To bear the weight of the priesthood, that is to say, to devote himself for his whole life, a man must either be born great, or become great; a vulgar heart, a feeble character, a grovelling mind, an imperfect education, will not come up to the mark. In this day our people require something more of the clergy, and they are right." ‡

BOOKS ON VOCATION.

Grafton's Vocation \$1 00

* *Memoriale*, trans. Bishop Forbes, 3.

† *Great Means of Salvation*, S. Alphonsus, App. ix.

‡ *Dupanloup. Œuvres*, xii. 645.

ARTICLES ON VOCATION.

Wilberforce's Ordination Addresses. 1st address.	
Personal Christian Life in the Ministry, by Bishop Huntington	25cts
The Great Means of Salvation, by S. Alphonsus.	
Last part	\$1 25

The Celibate Life.

OUR branch of the Church sees fit to allow a married clergy, and in her XXXII Article says, "Bishops, Priests, and Deacons are not commanded by God's law either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage. Therefore, it is lawful for them, as for all other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion, *as they shall judge the same to serve better to Godliness.*" But why is it always read and quoted on one side, the side of the married life? Is it not conceivable that that life which S. John the Baptist led, which S. Paul led, which our blessed Lord led, may at least sometimes, to state it very mildly, "serve better to Godliness"? Is it forgotten that Our Lord said, "There be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."*

There has been but one common interpretation of the passage, which even the most protestant commentators have to admit, namely, that it is at the very least a putting the celibate on a par with the married life, and many go further and teach, as the whole Church taught for many centuries, that it is a counsel of perfection. Is it forgotten that S. Paul said, "For I would that all men were even as myself, but every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner and one after that;"† and again, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman;"‡ or again, "He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife."§ Is it forgotten that the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth, these were they which were not defiled with

* Matt. xix. 12. † 1 Cor. vii. 7. ‡ Ibid. 1. § Ibid. 32, 33.

women ; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the *first fruits* unto God, and unto the Lamb." * Does all this mean nothing, or does it mean what the Church has always held it to mean, that there is a life of special consecration, a life modelled after Our Lord's Divine life, a life of self-denial given up entirely to the honor and worship of God and the furtherance of his kingdom ?

The very earliest Christian writers certainly recognize such a life. S. Ignatius says : " And ye, virgins to Christ in purity, not counting marriage an abomination, but desiring that which is *better*, not for the reproach of wedlock, but for the sake of meditating on the law," † and writing to Polycarp he says : " If any one can continue in a state of purity to Him who is lord of the flesh, let him so remain without boasting ; " ‡ and Tertullian, writing to his own wife, says : " But he nowhere permits marriage in such a way as not rather to wish us to do our utmost in imitation of his own example. Happy the man who shall prove like Paul." § A most casual knowledge of the fathers will convince any one that they recognize and praise the celibate life. It is undoubtedly true that many of the clergy in the very early church were married, but it is a curious fact that no passage can be pointed to showing that marriage took place after ordination. ||

What a contrast is the feeling among us ! What is the usual talk at the Seminary commons table at the end of the senior year ? Three things predominate ; I don't know which is considered of most importance, clerical millinery, how many calls N. has had, and how many dollars more than M. he is going to get, but apparently above all we hear of this one's engagement and that one's ; how soon can he get married ; won't he have a nice little home, etc., etc., etc. " Too many of our candidates," says the Bishop of Long Island, " enter

* Rev. xiv. 3, 4. † Ep. to Phil. IV. 224. ‡ Ibid. V. 229.

§ To his wife. I. III. 283.

|| Smith's Dict. Christ. Ant. I. 325 ; Hefele. Beiträge I. 123.

the ministry with such low views of its *morale* as to make it seem to them quite consistent with the solemn purpose which they profess of entire consecration to their work to forecast, not only in day dreams and visions, but by definite preliminary engagements, the comforts of wives and homes, of quiet studies and attractive pastoral surroundings. So far has this gone that it is no unusual thing for the candidate to arrange simultaneously for his wedding and his ordination.* How often we hear of engaged classes, every single man bound to the married life before he leaves the seminary and knows what the trials, the duties, the temptations of the priesthood are.

It is true, as Bishop Forbes says, "The Church of England has, as yet, left this (the celibacy of the clergy), as well as other matters relating to the same, purely to the consciences of individuals. It leans to the celibate; it does not enjoin it. But as men's souls are stirred more and more by the spirit of God, it must be, that celibacy, among men also, and especially among those whom God calls to the priesthood, will become a recognized religious vocation. Wise will be her course, if she follows the apostle's advice, and, without limiting the freedom which he admitted, directs her sons, as the most excellent way, to that which he chose.

After what has been said, it is unnecessary in a treatise of this kind (on the 39 Art.) to enlarge upon the increased influence, the capacity for labor, the disentanglement from the world, the economy of living, the increased facilities for missionary and hospital work of a celibate priesthood. At the price of much individual suffering, a mighty engine for the conversion of the world is thus recognized in clerical celibacy, as the fruit of self-devotion upon the call of God. And the spirit of St. Paul, reflected in the apostolic constitutions, and in the canons of the fourth century, finds its highest interpretation in such self-dedication, where the matured will, after having tested its powers, yields itself a living sacrifice to duty and to God." † A man may not desire

* The Christian Ministry, 260.

† Forbes on the Art. 657.

to take the three vows to bind himself to the monastic life; he may wish to remain a secular priest, but why should he necessarily go off and get married; why, above all things, should he bind himself to the married life before he is fairly out of the seminary? You say it is "not good for man to live alone." Very well, let us admit it, although there are hundreds of men who, for the sake of science, of some form of learning or research, do live alone—but why live alone? Wherever a man can live with a wife, where there is sufficient salary for a married man, and many places where there is not, two men can live together and work together; until it has been tried no one has any conception of the help it is in the work. Two or more men living together aid each other in their studies, aid each other in their work; one has the gift of instruction, the other the pastoral qualities more strongly developed. The work is done better, more thoroughly, not only than one man can do it, but than two men working separately could do it. Everything is talked over, is carefully considered. It prevents hasty or foolish action; each priest has more time for his spiritual exercises and study, beside the great help of having some one to read the offices with; but far better, the greatest of all privileges, the certain possibility of having the daily Eucharist, for what possible excuse can there be for any other or more lax practice when two priests live together? And with the daily Eucharist will come all those blessings which always follow its introduction.

I would not for a moment imply that one priest should not strive to celebrate daily, but he will have to depend upon the possibly uncertain presence of some faithful souls. Listen to what the saintly and learned Bishop of Orleans said when he first tried to get his clergy to live together: "Nothing," he writes, "is more favorable to the sacerdotal life. There can be no mistake about the matter if the question be rightly considered. Life in community is useful to us all, and any one who does not see this may fairly be suspected of presumption, especially when history shows us to what a degree the holiest priests and bishops in all ages, how-

ever brilliant and virtuous, always made a point of having near them witnesses of their daily life. Their own prudence admonished them, wise and holy as they were, that even if they did not require this aid to their own perseverance in well-doing, such a guarantee might become necessary, under certain delicate circumstances, for the preservation of the high reputation, which, next to a good life, is of the greatest importance for a priest and a pastor. Isolation in the ministry means dulness, languor, and weariness ; the slackening and relaxing of the vital forces of the soul ; the burden of care and anxiety pressing upon the imagination without anything to distract it ; it is for a poor priest to be perpetually face to face with his own ideas, his own wishes, fears, exaggerations, sorrows, and passions ; it is the deprivation, in a word, of the instruction, example, advice, and consolation which association in sacerdotal life secures to the sacred ministry. And as regards the duties and functions of the ministry, it is worse still. Isolation means weakness, incapacity, almost inevitably powerlessness, discouragement, and often in the end the complete extinction of all that makes vitality in pastoral work. At best it is abandonment to a blind and unproductive routine, wherein nothing happens to enlighten, to quicken, or to correct, and which is the more hopeless, because it is unconscious of its need." * If there were a real feeling of the true dignity of the priesthood, a conception of the sacerdotal spirit, it would certainly lead more men to giving up their entire time, ability, sympathy, in other words, their life, to the mighty work of saving souls."

* *Life of the Abbé Dupanloup*, I. 409.

The Religious Life.

THE office of a priest is good; the celibate priest is better; the religious priest is best. I use the term religious as the established phraseology, descriptive of conventual life,* there being no other word which exactly fills its place. The terms, "religious life" and "religious," are used technically; that is to say, they do not imply any necessary superiority of religiousness in its ordinary sense, or any exclusive appropriation of religious principle, but they imply a life of rule and devotion unlike that of ordinary social life, founded wholly on religion, and directed wholly to religious ends.†

The religious priest is one who is the member of an order, who lives under rule, who is bound by the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience—perhaps by some others of minor importance; these vows being either simple, that is, taken with the understanding that they may be dispensed by the bishop or superior, as the case may be; or solemn, not to be dispensed by any one, the only release being death. The whole argument for a celibate life, its glory and its advantages, applies in the religious life; only the celibate priest, who is also the religious priest, has the great advantage of his never having to live alone, of the certainty of care in sickness and old age, and the great help of its being publicly known that he is vowed to chastity, and to a large extent protected against suspicion or gossip.

The vow of poverty is simply the absolute fulfilment of our Lord's counsel of perfection: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me."‡

* See Worcester, in loc.

† Carter's Spiritual Instr. Religious Life. Preface.

‡ Matt. xix. 21.

The vow of obedience is the vow to do our Lord's will as revealed to us through a superior, even as our Lord came not to do His own will but His Father's ; we recognize the same principle in our vow of obedience to our bishop. In the case of the religious the vow is more absolute, and binds in everything, so far as the law of God will allow, not in matters of ecclesiastical discipline alone.

The practical economic advantage in such a life, as far as the work accomplished is concerned, is so evident it needs no defence ; the oneness of purpose, the concentration of action, the sending of each man to do that for which he is best fitted, the great economy of living, are evident facts. From the spiritual point of view, the advantages are equal, if not greater, both to the religious and to those among whom they work. Absolute freedom in teaching and in action, no lay control by vestries or otherwise, therefore perfect straightforwardness in dealing, the daily picture of self-denial which is held before the people, and which always appeals to two opposite classes from different motives—to the wealthy and luxurious, because it seems impossible, without the greatest sacrifices, that any should be able to give up what means so much to them : to the workingman and poor, who are always suspicious of self-interest, it appeals, as being something definite, in the way of self-denial, which they can understand and point to. Take the few parishes we have ministered to by priests who are religious, and see how successful their work has been. It is also a well-known fact that, in the sister communion of Rome, those parishes under regular priests are more popular and successful than those under seculars.

There is also the advantage in the case of hearing confessions, almost every one preferring to go to a priest who is a member of a religious order, rather than to a secular priest ; the former has usually far more experience, a greater understanding of the means necessary for a higher spiritual life, as he lives himself on a higher plane. It must be admitted that, so far, religious orders for men have not been successful in our branch of the

Church, not at all in the sense in which orders for women have succeeded and are growing. Those that we have are founded on original lines, rather than on the lines taken by the famous orders of western Christendom, or the later orders of the Roman church.

We have yet to see realized, what is so needed, a great teaching order, or an order given up to study.

What is the cause of this lack of growth? Can it be anything else than the self-willed ideas, the low view of the service of God, the desire of freedom and ease and comfort which so marks and mars our priesthood; when we are willing to give up our lives, our very selves, all that we are, all that we have, even our own wills also, then will come the orders, and not till then. Starting orders will not make religious priests, but priests fully convinced of a religious vocation will soon call for orders, and call so loudly that the orders will come.

Ought not every young priest who has the exterior vocation, namely, is free from calls upon him, or ties which bind him to parents or relations, to examine and see whether he has not the interior vocation, or call from God, so to give himself up absolutely?

May God hasten the time when many of our priests will lead lives of perfect devotion in religious orders.

ON VOCATION TO THE RELIGIOUS LIFE, THE LIFE ITSELF,
AND THE VOWS ASSUMED.

Grafton's Vocation	\$1.00
Carter's Spiritual Instructions on the Religious Life	1.25
Carter's Vows and the Religious State . . . .	.60
S. Alphonsus' The Great Means of Salvation. Last part	1.25
Montalembert's Monks of the West. Introduc- tion	
Lacordaire's Order of St. Dominic . . . . .	.75

Spiritual Reading.

S. BERNARD, in his "Ladder for Religious," explains the steps necessary for trying to reach God and perfection ; he quotes the words of our Lord, " Seek and ye shall find ; knock and it shall be opened unto you ; " * and applying these words to the spiritual life, he says, " We seek in spiritual reading, we find in meditation, we knock in prayer, and God is open to our souls for love and worship." † S. Isidore says, " Whosoever would walk with God, ought frequently to pray and read, for when we pray we speak to God, when we read God speaks to us. All progress comes from reading and meditation."

According to S. Francis de Sales, spiritual reading is to prayer what oil is to a lamp ; alas ! how many lamps are extinguished morning after morning for lack of oil. ‡ It is not only of the utmost value in our own spiritual lives, but we will never be able to help others unless we have absorbed and assimilated, made our own, those spiritual truths which we can alone learn by a devout study of the Scripture and careful reading of spiritual books. One thing we must bear in mind : there is a vast difference between reading a spiritual book, and reading a book spiritually ; the first is what we so often do when we read the Bible, especially in following out that curious custom which so many have of reading a chapter of the Bible night and morning, regardless of where that chapter may be, or how long, treating the book of Deuteronomy and the Gospel of St. John as of equal value in the spiritual life ; we had better leave that sort of reading of the Bible to the lessons in the daily offices. To read a book spiritually is to read

* Matt. vii. 7. † De Modo Orandi, c. ii.

‡ Quoted from Dir. Sacerdotale, II.

it and apply it to our own souls, to take some thought from it to help us on our way to perfection. First of all, we should read the Bible. "Religious books are profitable," an old French writer says; "but the best of them do not contain the juices and marrow which you will find in every word of Holy Scripture. One sentence will often suffice to fill the mind, and uphold and strengthen it through the day. Who cannot return over and over again to the Gospels, especially that of St. John, or the Epistles, or the Book of Wisdom, finding continually new delight? Whereas most human writings grow tedious to us after we know them well."*

In reading the Bible spiritually, read it rather by time than by quantity; say I have so much time; take some portion that is really helpful and read it thoroughly, carefully, several times if necessary, and try to understand its personal application to your soul; make it the basis of most of your meditations. Such books as Williams on the Gospels, and Neale on the Psalms, Denton on the Gospels and Epistles, are of great help for this sort of study of the Bible.

Other spiritual books fall naturally under two classes, those of which we will find it helpful to read only a short portion at a time, and which we can read and re-read with advantage, the Imitation, the Spiritual Combat, the Hidden Life of the Soul, Holy Living and Dying, and books of that class. We frequently grow fond of one book and have it often by us. We all know how S. Francis de Sales carried the Spiritual Combat always about with him and called it his "dear book." It is a good thing to follow his example and have one such book always in our pocket; they come in convenient editions, so whenever we have a spare minute, in the cars, waiting for people, or in church before the services, we can pick up a thought or two which will help us one step further on.

Then there are books which we read through more or less rapidly. Such are large treatises on the spiritual life, like Scaramilli's *Directorium Asceticum* or Goulburn's *Thoughts on Personal Religion*, and the lives of

* *Light of the Conscience*, 79.

holy men and women, or of the Saints. To stir up our zeal and to increase our earnestness there is nothing like the biography of some holy priest. What man, after reading Lowder's Life, or the Life of Henri Perreyve, Priestly Life in France, Life of the Curé d'Ars, or of some of the great Saints, does not close the book at times with the feeling that he would do anything for Christ's sake, lead any life of self-denial, however great? There is, alas! too little of that feeling among us; if there was more demanded of us, as seminarians, as priests, how much more would we not give? In the words of one of the professors of one of our larger seminaries, if a man shows a desire for a higher life, the authorities are too apt to take him by the throat and throttle him, for fear it may lead to something unusual.

Read the Life of Dupanloup, the most successful educator of boys and men in modern times, and see how he appealed to the heroic in men, the craving for great things, the real earnest desire for Saintship.

We all feel the need of being appealed to in such a way; by reading the lives of great men, especially great and saintly priests, we will stir ourselves up to heroic acts of self-sacrifice and to greater zeal.

BOOKS ON THE SPIRITUAL LIFE WHICH CAN BE READ IN SMALL PORTIONS.

Holy Living and Dying.

The Hidden Life of the Soul.

Spiritual Letters by S. Francis de Sales.

The Imitation of Christ.

The Spiritual Combat.

The Devout Life.

(All in small and cheap editions.)

Memoriale Vitæ Sacerdotalis.	A trans. by Bishop	
Forbes		\$1.50

SYSTEMATIC TREATISES ON THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

Directorium Asceticum.	Trans. by Archbishop Manning, 4 vols.	\$7.20
Thoughts on Personal Religion.	Goulburn.	

The Ascetical Works of S. Alphonsus. Vols. I., II., III., and XIII. sold separately in the Centenary ed.	\$1.25
Growth in Holiness. Faber	1.00
Spiritual Doctrine. Lallemant	1.25
Holy Living and Holy Dying.	

BIOGRAPHIES ESPECIALLY HELPFUL IN THE PRIESTLY LIFE.

Inner Life of Lacordaire	\$2.50
Life of Henri Perreyve . . . .	.50
Priestly Life in France . . . .	.50
Life of a Dominican Artist . . . .	.50
S. Francis de Sales . . . .	.50
Life of Charles Lowder	1.00
Life of James Skinner	1.00
The Life of Dupanloup. 2 vols.	
Life of the Curé d'Ars. By Monnin	1.50

Meditation.

THERE is no form of prayer which brings us so close to God, which is such a help to the higher spiritual life, as the form of mental prayer known as meditation. It is of the greatest importance, because a person who practises it is sure to grow in the spiritual life, and one in a state of sin will invariably give it up. S. Teresa says, "Who neglects mental prayer has no need of devils to lead him into evil, he goes into it of his own accord; but to meditate and at the same time to persist in sin or lukewarmness is impossible."

"Woe to thee, oh priest!" says S. Ambrose, and it applies just as well to the seminarian, "if, losing little by little the habit of meditation, and consequently the knowledge of thyself, of thy charge, and of the burden laid upon thee, thou begin to live without holy and well-grounded misgivings."

It seems as if one of the very root causes of the lukewarmness and lack of zeal and spirituality among many of our students and clergy is due to the disuse of this great means of grace. Many never attempt it because they think it difficult, others plead lack of time, or the impossibility of quiet and retirement. We ought to let nothing interfere with the practice; gain the time by early rising; you certainly can find a quiet place, best of all, the chapel. It is not difficult to learn; follow our Lord's example and go apart into a quiet place awhile.* Our careless lives, our frequent falling into sin, come not so much from a lack of faith as from a want of due thought upon and appreciation of the faith. S. Augustine says, "Of meditation, devotion is born, for, by the consideration of our own miseries humility and compunction are produced in our souls; by the consideration

* Matt. xiv. 23.

of God's goodness, there is begotten within us a feeling of piety and love, which makes easy to us whatever is connected with the service of God,"* and S. Chrysostom calls it "the root and foundation of every virtue, the head and source from which all virtues flow."†

Two things you must be careful about ; avoid careless meditation ; it is far more difficult to cure a bad habit than to start from the beginning, and do not give up or be worried if there be spiritual dryness in your meditation. True devotion lies not in sentiment and feeling, but in obedience and a good intention. Dry meditation is often more full of merit, it is an act of real humility and self-oblation.‡ Say with Jacob, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me."§ There are two preparations for meditation, the general, or remote, and the particular. The general preparation may be divided into six heads. 1. A sincere desire of progress in the spiritual life. 2. Recollectedness and watchfulness over our thoughts. 3. A great purity of heart and careful abstaining from sin. 4. Mortification of the passions. 5. Always having some end in view, to serve God, to acquire a virtue, to overcome a besetting sin. 6. A continual recollection of God's presence.|| One should not give up meditation because one does not fulfil the remote preparation, but the more one strives to fulfil it, the better the meditation will be. The best place to make a meditation is where we can be most quiet, and are least apt to be disturbed ; a chapel or church is naturally to be preferred to an ordinary room. The best time is early, after our morning prayers. S. John Climacus says, "Give therefore to God the first fruits of the day, as the day will belong to him who has first taken possession of it." Besides, we can always command this time by early rising ; ten or fifteen minutes is as long as will be helpful at first ; later on, one may be able to meditate for half an hour or more, or to make a second

* De Spir. et Anima, c. 50, Tom. vi. 1190 B.

† De Orandi Deum, 1, iii.

‡ Growth in Holiness, 256.

§ Gen. xxxii. 26.

|| Cresswell on Meditation, ix.

or third meditation later in the day. Whatever be the time we give ourselves, struggle against curtailing it on account of dryness, and if we receive peace and consolation, extend the time.

Never attempt to make a meditation soon after meals. If it cannot be accomplished in the morning, let it be made after vespers, before supper, or at bedtime after compline.

That position should be chosen which is most helpful, the preludes kneeling and the considerations sitting or even walking; if the whole meditation can be made kneeling, so much the better; a pious picture, cross, or crucifix is often a great help, placed before one.

Sometimes it is helpful and stirs one to love and zeal to make the meditation aloud, as though it were a public meditation.

The subject of the meditation may be anything connected with God or the religious life; for beginners, the four last things, scenes from the passion, miracles, parables, objects of nature, things easily brought before the imagination, should be chosen.

The particular or proximate preparation consists in reading over the meditation, the night before, or shortly before one intends to meditate, and at the time of meditation, the placing one's self in the presence of God, impressing this thought on the mind, by the consideration of God's greatness and our own littleness, invoking the Trinity and saying the *Veni Creator*, or some prayer invoking the aid of the Holy Spirit, making acts of contrition, faith, hope, love, etc., as may seem most helpful.

The meditation,* which must exercise the memory, understanding, and will, should consist of two preludes, with two or three sets of considerations, some affections

* I have chosen the Ignatian method, as far better known, and as that most usually adopted in books of meditation; it seems also the easiest for beginners, although more complicated in outline. The method of S. Francis of Sales is substantially the same, and that of S. Alphonsus, who used somewhat more freedom. The Sulpician method, which is simply the primitive method used by the monks and fathers of the early church, and revived by M. Olier, should be used if found more helpful. See Faber's *Growth in Holiness*: Prayer.

and resolutions, the colloquies, the recollection, and the repetition.

The first prelude is the exercise of the memory, and consists in picturing to our mind the scene or truth on which we wish to meditate. The second prelude is a prayer for the grace we wish to obtain.

The considerations, each usually divided into three points, exercise the intellect; having pictured as vividly as possible, by means of the memory and imagination, the subject of the meditation, we make an application of the truth to our own lives; this is a most important part of the meditation, and should not be hurried over; by it we lead our soul to desire the things belonging to the higher life.

Then comes the resolution in the exercise of the will; we should make some practical resolution, which can be carried out at once in our spiritual life.

The colloquies are prayers of thanksgiving for help or humility for dryness in the meditation; the term is also used for short prayers or ejaculations used throughout the meditation, or of the prayers used at the end to confirm and seek help to carry out the resolutions. The recollection and repetition, which are seldom used except in retreat or by those far advanced in the spiritual life, are the self-examination of how the meditation has been prepared and made, and the repetition of parts of it, to impress the mind.

The terms, Purgative, Illuminative, or Unitive way, express three objects of a course of meditations, either to a hatred of sin, a progress of holiness, or a union of the soul with God. This description of a meditation may sound elaborate, but the thing itself is easy; beginners and even those well advanced find the use of a book of meditations necessary, having neither the time nor ability to prepare their own. A little use of such a book soon teaches the form into which a meditation naturally falls.

Those who have never tried this form of prayer, let them but try and they will find at once how great a help and comfort it is; as S. Bernard says: "By this our minds are purified, our passions curbed, our actions

ordered, our exercises corrected, our character formed, our life adorned and regulated."

ARTICLES ON MEDITATION.

Cresswell's Meditations. Introduction.
 Directorium Asceticum. Vol. I, Art. V.
 Growth in Holiness, Faber. XV.
 Great Means of Salvation. 252. •
 Spiritual Combat. XLV.

BOOKS OF MEDITATION.

Cresswell's Meditations. 2 vols.	. . .	\$3.50
Mortimer's Meditations. 2 series	. . .	2.50
Spiritual Exercises. Ignatius	. . .	1.25
Dupont's Meditations. 6 vols.		
Nourishment of the Christian Soul	. . .	2.00
The Way of Salvation. S. Alphonsus	. . .	1.25
Meditations on the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Passion, by Fr. Hall	. . . 50c., 50c., and 35c.	
Benedictus Dominus	. . . . .	2.00

Prayer.

WE have ascended two steps of the ladder which S. Bernard made to lead to perfection and to God.* These steps are spiritual reading and meditation. There is the third step, prayer. As he says in another place, "Meditation shows us with its light what we stand in need of, the prayer of petition obtains it; the former prepares the road, the latter leads us safely along the road."† In another and perhaps a higher sense prayer is the first step up the ladder; it is absolutely necessary—by means of it we obtain that grace which alone can make anything we do pleasant in God's sight. "Without me ye can do nothing."‡ S. Augustine, commenting on the passage, says: "Our Lord did not say, 'Without me ye can complete nothing,' but 'Without me ye can do nothing.'"§ Showing us that without grace we can do no good thing; as S. Leo says, "Man does no good thing except that which God by His grace enables him to do." S. Alphonsus brings out clearly the point that prayer is the most necessary. "Some devout souls," he says, "spend a great deal of time in reading and meditation, but pay little attention to prayer; there is no doubt that spiritual reading and meditation are very useful things, but, says S. Augustine, 'it is much more use to pray.' By reading and meditation we learn our duty, but by prayer we obtain grace to do it." "It is better to pray than to read: by reading we know what we ought to do; by prayer we receive what we ask."|| "Read and meditate as we like, we shall never satisfy our obligations, unless we ask of God the grace to fulfil them."¶

It seems hardly needful to insist on the necessity of prayer to any one who makes any pretension to leading a

* Dir. Ascet. i. 207.

† John xv. 5.

‡ De Perf. Vitæ, c. 5.

† Serm. in Festo S. Andrea, Tom. i. 137.

§ In Joh. Tract lxxxi., Tom. iii. 2292 A.

¶ Great Means of Salvation, 60.

holy life. "Men ought always to pray and not to faint;"* "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation;"† "Ask and it shall be given unto you."‡ And so again and again do the Scriptures emphasize the necessity of prayer. As S. Chrysostom says, "The body without the soul cannot live, so the soul without prayer is dead."§ S. Thomas is most emphatic in his assertions of the necessity of prayer: "Every one is obliged to use the prayer of petition," he says, "for the very reason that every one is bound to gain for himself those spiritual gifts which can be given by no one but God alone, nor obtained from Him except by way of earnest petition."|| And again S. Augustine says, "He knows how to live aright who knows how to pray aright."¶ There are three things necessary in our prayers—I am speaking especially of prayer for ourselves—in order that they may be certainly answered: we must ask for things necessary for salvation, we must pray piously—that is, with faith and humility—we must pray with perseverance.

First, then, we must pray for things necessary for our salvation. S. Augustine, explaining the words of the Gospel, "Whatever ye shall ask in my name,"** says that "Nothing which is asked detrimental to salvation is asked in the name of the Saviour;†† and again the same father says, "A man may pray faithfully for the necessities of life, and God may mercifully refuse to hear him, because the physician knows better than the patient what is good for the sick man."‡‡

Second, we must pray with faith and humility. "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering."§§ How often we hear our Lord saying, "As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee;"||| "Thy faith hath made thee whole;"¶¶ "Thy faith hath saved thee."***

Faith also implies confidence as a necessary part of it; "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath

* Luke xviii. 1.

† Matt. xxvi. 41.

‡ Matt. vii. 7.

§ De Orando Deum, ii. 1.

|| In IV. Sent. Dist. 15 art. 1, q. 3.

¶ Serm. 55.

** John xiv. 13.

†† In Joh. tr. 102, Tom. iii. 2366 B.

‡‡ Pros. Amit. Sent. 212, Tom. x. 2587 C.

§§ S. James i. 6.

||| S. Matt. viii. 13.

¶¶ Matt. ix. 22.

*** Luke vii. 50.

great recompense of reward."* As is our confidence so shall be the graces we receive from God; if our confidence is great, great too will be the graces. "Great faith merits great things." And our prayers must be with humility. "God resisteth the proud and giveth grace unto the humble."† He does not hear the prayers of the proud who trust in their own strength, but for that reason leaves them to their own feebleness, and in this state, deprived of God's aid, they will certainly perish.

Above all, our prayers must be persevering. "Men ought always to pray and not to faint;"‡ "Continue in prayer;"§ "Pray without ceasing."|| Commenting on the parable in S. Luke, in which our Lord teaches "Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth,"¶ Cornelius says, "God wishes us to be persevering in prayer to the extent of importunity;"** and S. Augustine says, "How much more will the good God give, who both commands us to ask and is angry if we ask not."††

Besides the prayer for ourselves, there is the absolute duty and obligation of prayer for one another; in other words, intercessory prayer. "Pray one for another that you may be healed;"‡‡ "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask and He shall give him life for them that sin not unto death."§§ There is also a certain obligation to vocal prayer as opposed to mental prayer. "When you pray *say*."||| We find our Lord praying to the Father by means of vocal prayer: "Jesus, lifting up his eyes to heaven, said, Father."¶¶ Vocal prayer is most useful for the three following reasons given by the Angelic Doctor:

1. It stirs up the devotion.
2. We ought to worship with the mouth.
3. It gives vent to our heart's feelings.*** And yet we must always remember, as St. Gregory says: "True

* Heb. x. 53.

† James v. 6.

‡ Luke xviii. 1.

§ Col. iv. 2.

|| I Thess. v. 17.

¶ Luke xi. 8.

** In loco, page 161.

†† Serm. 61, Tom. v. 506 A.

‡‡ James v. 16.

§§ I John v. 16.

||| Luke xi. 2. ¶¶ John xi. 41. *** 2, 2, Q xxiii. art. xii., Tom. iv. 579.

prayer consists not in the words shaped by the mouth, but in the interior attention of the heart ; for the sounds which sink into the ears of God are not the words which fall from our lips, but the holy desires and aspirations of our hearts. If, when begging of our Lord life everlasting, our lips alone move and our heart is void of desire, though we may cry out with a loud voice we shall be as though silent, and saying much shall remain silent in the sight of God, as though mute and dumb.*

Our prayers divide themselves into two heads, public and private. The public prayers are those prescribed by the church, and by the chaplain of the seminary. They bind us absolutely, and should not be omitted without very grave cause. Their omission not only deprives God of the worship due him, but breaks the rule of the Church, and is an act of disobedience to our ecclesiastical authorities. Whether we may deem the services expedient or helpful, or not, has nothing to do with it ; our duty is to obey.

One not unfrequently hears the excuse of study given to stay away from the daily offices. The obligation is a much higher one than study, the duty far more important. Outside of the fact that our daily service is a duty we owe God, it is of far more benefit as regards our own souls, and the souls of those to whom we may some day minister. An intellectual priest, or a holy priest, which do we desire to be ; which will most win souls to God ? We can only be both intellectual and holy by carefully fulfilling our religious duties.

The celebration of the Holy Communion binds first of all, and above all, and we should never stay away from that service if it be in our power to be present.

Daily Morning and Evening Prayer is distinctly the Church's rule,† and if absent from the office, we should read it in private.

There may be other services, such as missionary ser-

* Moral. Lib. xxii. c. 13, Tom. i. 652 B.

† See The Priest in his Inner Life, by Lidden, where the whole question is put in a most helpful way. Even if not bound by the English rubric, the spirit of the rubric should bind us as Christian clerics.

vices, special services, additional services during Lent, prescribed by the authorities ; these we should attend ; only remember they are distinctly special services, and do not take the place of the daily offices, which are of higher obligation and should not be neglected for them.

Besides the public chapel services, it is often helpful for the men to have services among themselves. The saying of some of the hours Sext before dinner and Compline before bedtime can usually be accomplished without interfering with any regular duty. During Lent or Advent, and on Fridays, other of the Hours might be added ; it is well to take advantage of every opportunity ; we cannot have too many helps on the road to heaven.

Our private prayers will be influenced by our temperament, the point which we have reached in the spiritual life, and many things which differ in the life of each man.

One thing we should be most careful of—never under any circumstance to omit our morning and evening prayers. It is far more important that the habit be never broken into, than that we say long or elaborate prayers. Make a rule which you can certainly keep, and then if you have time add to it. A manual of prayers will be found helpful. It is usually best to decide on a good manual, and then use it and not change. The prayers in it will soon become so familiar as to be our own. The collects and prayers of the Prayer Book appeal to many persons more than any other prayers ; it is well to use them frequently that we may become as familiar as possible with them. We should put aside a certain portion of time, say an hour on Friday afternoon, for intercessory prayer for the Church, the clergy, the seminary, missions, and the many things which demand the help of our prayers. A simple *prie-dieu* with a crucifix, cross, or picture of the crucifixion is a help in saying our prayers and a reminder not to forget them.

If this little book is of any help to you, say a prayer for the author.

ARTICLES ON PRAYER.

Thoughts on Personal Religion. Pt. II, C. I.
 Directorium Asceticum. I, Art. ix.
 The Great Means of Salvation. Pt. I.
 Holy Living. Ch. iv., Sec. vii.
 Growth in Holiness. Ch. xv.

MANUALS OF PRAYER.

The Treasury of Devotion	\$0.90
Holy Living . . . . .	.40
The Priest's Prayer Book	2.50
The Churchman's Guide to Faith and Piety .	
The English Catholic Vade Mecum . . . .	.75
The Way of Life . . . . .	.75
Manual of Prayers. Dr. Dix . . . . .	.35

MANUALS OF INTERCESSORY PRAYER.

Fr. Benson's Manual . . . . .	.35
Bright's Ancient Collects	1.75

The Holy Communion.

ALL our prayers, all our meditations, all our spiritual readings are as nothing in the spiritual life compared with that one thing which our Lord has commanded us to do in remembrance of Him ;* that great act in which we show forth his death till He come ;† that mighty feast in which we feed on our Lord's Body and Blood, ‡ in order that we may have life, that we may dwell in Him and He in us.§ As S. Athanasius says : " Let us come to the consecration of the Mysteries. This bread and this cup, so long as the prayers and supplications have not yet taken place, are bare elements, but when the great prayers and supplications have been sent up, the word cometh down into the bread and cup and it becometh His body." ||

What is it we come to ? What is it we receive ? " O marvel," says S. Chrysostom ; " O, love of God for man. He who sitteth aloft with the Father is at that hour held in the hands of all and giveth himself to those who will, to fold and embrace." ¶ " For when they were eating He took bread, brake it, and said : " This is My Body which is broken for you for the remission of sins." " The initiated know what I mean. And again the cup, saying, " This is My Blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." And Judas was present when Christ said this : " This is the Body which thou, O Judas, didst sell for thirty pieces of silver ; this is the blood for which, a little before, thou

* Luke, xxii. 19.

† 1 Cor. xi. 26.

‡ John vi. 53.

§ John vi. 56.

| Serm. ad Bapt. ap. Euchl. de Pasch. Mair, Script. Vet. ix. 625, Forbes 511.

¶ De Sacerdot. iii. 5, 1, 382. Quoted from Forbes. 525.

madest that shameless compact with the reckless Pharisees." *

The same who adorned that table, adorneth this too now. For it is not man who maketh what lieth there to become the Body and Blood of Christ, but Christ himself who was crucified for us. † "For indeed His Body is set before us now, not His garment only, but even His Body; not for us to touch it only, but also to eat and be filled. . . . Believe, therefore, that even now it is that supper at which He himself sat down, for this is in no respect different from that. For neither doth man make this and Himself the other, but both This and That is His own work. When, therefore, thou seest the Priest delivering it unto thee, account not that it is the Priest that doeth so, but that it is Christ's Hand that is stretched out. . . . For he that hath given the greater, *i.e.*, hath set himself before thee, much more will he not think scorn to distribute unto thee of His Body. Let us hear, therefore, both priests and subjects what we have had vouchsafed to us; let us hear and tremble. Of His own flesh He hath granted us our fill. He hath set before us Himself sacrificed." ‡ If we only really believed, if we only really felt, that in that Sacrament was every grace, every help, every blessing we needed, that our Lord was as really present to help us, to answer our prayers, as he was when He walked up and down the pathways of Judea, would we ever stay away when the Divine Mystery was to be celebrated? Hear what Eusebius of Alex. says: "Abide during the Divine and Holy Eucharistic service; complete thy prayer; on no account leave before the dismissal.

Behold thy Lord, divided in pieces and distributed, and not expended; and if thou hast thy conscience clean, approach and communicate of the Body and Blood." § Is any time more fitting in which to make intercession for all our needs, and the needs of God's people, than when we are in that awful presence, a presence

* De Prodit. Jud. 5. † Ibid. 6. Quoted from Forbes, 526.

‡ In Matt. Hom. i. 3. Quoted from Forbes, 526.

§ Orat. de Dom. init. Gall. viii. 252-253. Quoted from Pusey, 450.

as real, nay more real, than the dread Shechinah over the mercy-seat of the Tabernacle.

Why if we have already received at an early celebration should we not stay to the later celebration, and make use of that time when our Lord is especially present, to plead for the needs of His Church, His clergy, and His people, apart from the whole question of its being our highest act of worship?

Shall we not indeed worship our Lord there present? Can we ever come into contact, ever come into His especial presence, without worshipping Him? Listen to S. Augustine, speaking of the sense in which we worship the earth, God's footstool: "For He took upon Him earth from earth, because flesh is from earth, and He received flesh from the flesh of Mary, and because He walked here in very flesh, and gave that very flesh to us to eat for our salvation, and no one eateth that flesh unless he hath first worshipped."* S. Ambrose, commenting on the same psalm, says: "And so by the footstool the earth is understood, and by the earth the Flesh of Christ, which to this day we adore in the mysteries."†

There were many centuries during which the whole Christian world adored our Blessed Lord in the Eucharist, and it is to be marked that all bodies of Eastern Christians, many of whom fell into heresy and were cut off from the church in the earliest ages, all agree in worshipping our Lord present in the Eucharist.

If the very presence of our Lord begets in us such lowliness, reverence, and adoration, in what condition should our souls and bodies be, when we are going to receive the Incarnate Son of God into our very selves; as S. Chrysostom says, "Purer than what sunbeam should not that hand be which is to sever this Flesh, the mouth that is filled with spiritual fire, the tongue that is reddened by that most awful Blood."‡ If we have committed mortal sin, and how many of us have, who, listen-

* Ps. xcvi. Tom. iv. 1521, A.

† De Spiritu Sancto, lib. iii. cap. xi. Tom. 2, 794, A.

‡ Hom. lxxxii. 5.

ing to that dread warning of S. Paul's, does not tremble? Let us be certain that it is washed away in the blood of the cross, applied by the ministers to whom our Lord gave this power, and in the manner in which the church for ages has administered it. Oh! the peace, the comfort of that absolution and the certainty of feeling that our sins are indeed forgiven and that we come with pure souls to that holy feast. With the preparation of the soul there should also be the preparation of the body, we should always come fasting. Hear how serious a matter S. Chrysostom regards it: "They say that I gave communion to some after they had eaten. And if I did this, let my name be blotted out of the book of Bishops, and not written in the book of the orthodox faith, lo! if I did anything of the sort Christ will cast me out of His kingdom. But if they persist in urging this and are contentious, let them also pass sentence against the Lord Himself, who gave the communion to the Apostles after supper."* Again in the 27th homily on I Cor., he says: "Before you receive, you fast, that you may in some way appear worthy of the communion." And hear S. Augustine: "It is clear that when he disciples first received the Body and Blood of the Lord, they were not fasting. Must we therefore censure the Universal Church, because the Sacrament is everywhere partaken of by persons fasting? Nay, verily, for from that time, it pleased the Holy Spirit to appoint to the honor of so great a Sacrament, that the Body of the Lord should take the precedence of all other food entering the mouth of a Christian, and it is for this reason that the custom referred to is universally observed."† S. Augustine here clearly brings out the reason why we must fast; it is a precept of the whole Church, it therefore differs from all other fasting in that it is a ritual fast, and must be observed as prescribed, namely, from the midnight before, it is forbidden to eat any food whatever or drink a single drop of any liquid.

In what way in these later days are we released from the law which all the rest of Christendom observes, and

* Ep. 125.

† Epist. Januarii, Tom. ii. 189 c.

which all the Church observed for over a thousand years? Very lax, or very stubborn must we have become if we are unwilling to show so slight an act of respect, to undergo so little self-denial.

Do we wonder why our communions bear so little fruit? Instead of doing everything we can to prepare our souls and bodies for that divine feast, we do nothing.

There is no need or possible excuse that I can think of which should make a seminarian break this rule of fasting communion, except he be *in articulo mortis*.*

Yet we see men Sunday after Sunday sleep through the early celebration, and after breakfast going to a late celebration and receiving, too lazy to get up early, too careless to care whether they fast or not. What! is it not the temptation of the devil which urges us, instead of doing everything, to do nothing when we are about to receive the Body and Blood of the Incarnate Son of God?

BOOKS ON THE HOLY COMMUNION.

Cobb's Kiss of Peace	\$4.00
Wilberforce's Holy Communion	2.00
Sadler's One Offering . . . . .	.75

ON FASTING COMMUNION.

Evening Communion Contrary to the Teaching of the Church. Lidden . . . . .	.40
Fasting Reception of the Blessed Sacrament. Hall.	

ON ADORATION.

Keble's Eucharistic Adoration75
-----------------------------------------	-----

* I would urge every man to make a thorough study of the subject of fasting Communion; the conclusion, it seems to me, can be but one: we must fast, whether we like it or not.

Self-Examination.

S. BASIL says : " At the close of each day, when all our labors both of mind and body are brought to an end, each one before retiring to rest should set himself to an attentive examination of his conscience, in order to discover the faults which he has committed during the past day."* And S. Ephrem, " At night time, withdrawing into the closet of thy heart, thou shouldst question thyself, saying : ' Have I this day offended my God in any point ? Have I spoken idle words ? Have I through neglect or contempt omitted to do any good action ? Have I wounded in any particular my neighbor's feelings ? ' etc."†

When we consider how the pious heathen, with their little light, frequently had a regular habit of self-examination, it seems almost unnecessary to argue the importance of it to a Christian man, above all one soon to hold the great dignity of the priesthood, and yet we all know how apt we are to neglect this duty. S. Paul lays the strongest possible stress on the practice, saying : " For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged."‡ All other spiritual exercises lead us on toward perfection, but this exercise not only does that, but sees that we do not forget or neglect the others.

Coming to the practice of self-examination, we should 1st, place ourselves as we do for meditation in the presence of God, thinking of one of the four last things or something which will make us feel a horror of sin and a dread of punishment ; 2d, pray for light to know our sins ; as S. Gregory says, " Self-love deludes us and blinds the eye of our mind so that we fail to perceive our faults, or

* Serm. De Institut. Mon.

† Tom. iii. Serm. Ascetic. De Vita Religios.

‡ Matt. vii. i.

they appear much less than they really are, and thus we make much less account of them than we ought."* 3d. Make a diligent search of all your faults. "Set up a tribunal within thyself," says S. Augustine, "and judge the cause of the life thou hast this day led. Let thy thoughts go in search of thy sins, and let them accuse thee before God. Let thy conscience stand as witness against thee. Let the fear and love of God be the holy executioners to slay thy sins with the sword of repentance."† In this examination, as S. Chrysostom says, "Thou must proceed against thyself with rigor and exactness. Thou must carefully examine all the thoughts that have passed through thy mind, all the words that have issued from thy mouth, and all the actions that thou hast done, nor will any time be better suited for doing this than at eventide, when thou art about to lay thee down upon thy bed."‡

4th. Pray that your sins may be forgiven. That you may be given grace to resist such temptations in the future, resolve to try to overcome those sins which you find you are most apt to commit, and to avoid whatever may be the occasion of them, and give yourself some penance; as S. Chrysostom says in another place: "Let thy mind and thy thoughts sit in judgment over thy soul and conscience. Look into thy doings, cast out all thy faults, and to each of them assign a fitting chastisement and a proportionate penance."§

As in meditation, a picture of the crucifixion, a cross or crucifix, is helpful as making us feel what it cost to wash away our sins.

A set of questions is often useful and in a general examination almost necessary.

Almost every one will find it helpful to note down on paper from time to time what sins he is committing, or if he is fighting some particular sin, how often he commits it in any given time.

* Hom. iv. in Ezech. Tom. i, 1162, B.

† Hom. 40. Ex Quin. Hom. cap. 6, Tom. v. 1359, B.

‡ In Ps. L. Tom. 2.

§ Tom. 43. In Matt.

It is humiliating to see how often we commit the same sin, and how many acts of sin we are guilty of, when without such an account we could not really perceive how bad the habit was.

Our examination will differ in method, and the amount of time given to it, according to the object for which it is made. First, there is the general examination, which, if we have gone to confession, we have made of our whole life, or which we all ought to make, whether we go to confession or not, and which, if repeated now and then once a year at our retreat or during Lent, is a great source of humiliation and a great help to the thorough understanding of our character. It should be made with great care and thoroughness, and it is often best to divide our life into time divisions, our life as boys at school, at college, in the seminary, etc. Or some prefer to make it by taking up one sin after another, first the commandments, then the seven deadly sins, and considering under each heading the sins of thought, word, and deed.

It is usually best to make this examination at different times, dividing our life, or the sins, into three or four divisions, so the mind does not become wearied, and the last part of the examination is made as well as the first.

This examination ought greatly to increase our penitence and make us know our besetting sin.

Then there is the examination each week to be made as a preparation for our communion, which should be made with more thoroughness than the daily examination; for this it is also well to use a set of questions such as one may find in any manual of devotion.

The daily examination need only take two or three minutes; it ought rather to be a particular examination of some one sin, whatever the sin may be that we are then trying to conquer.

We cannot root out all sins at once; we must proceed with method, and attack first one sin, then another, and so step by step to strive after perfection.

It is perhaps well to write down two or three questions which touch on this sin, and to ask ourselves

these questions each night ; when we feel that this sin or fault is less frequent, we can go on to the next.

With all our self-examination there must be a strong purpose to avoid sin, or the practice is worse than useless, it is the most deadly sort of formalism. As Thomas à Kempis says, "Our spiritual progress is proportional to our good purposes."

Arvisenet makes our Lord say : "I increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with the Father and with men. Thou also, O my son, oughtest, day by day, to increase ; if thou dost not increase, thou deceasest ; and how shalt thou increase, if thou watch not thy shortcomings, if thou observe them not, if thou amend them not ?" *

ARTICLES ON SELF-EXAMINATION.

Directorium Asceticum. I. Art. ix.

Memoriale Vitæ Sacerdotalis. Cap. 40.

Personal Religion. Pt. II. Civ.

OUTLINES OF SELF-EXAMINATION.

Almost every devotional manual contains a set of questions.

That in the Treasury of Devotion is quite full ; for a priest that in the

Priest's Prayer Book	\$2.50
Examination of Conscience, by Gaduel . . . . .	.30
General Confession Made Easy . . . . .	.15
Enchiridion Clericorum (p. 166-182)	1 75
Keble's Manual for the Altar . . . . .	.50

* Memoriale Sacer. cap. 40.

A Rule of Life.

S. AUGUSTINE says, "Order is our guide to God, and whatever comes from God is always well ordered;" * and S. Gregory says, "He who lives according to rule, lives according to God."

It seems almost needless to argue the advantage of a rule; practically we all live more or less by rule; it is simply a question of degree; what we should strive after is to make such a rule as will most aid us in our life, spiritual, intellectual, and physical.

It should not be so severe a rule that we will be tempted frequently to break it; let us begin with an easy one, and increase it if possible. S. Eucherius says: "Count that day only as having been really lived which you have spent without any breach of rule." †

The various seminaries we may be living in, our previous habits of mind and of body will vary the rule; no cut and dried plan can be laid down, but certain outlines for such a plan can be suggested. We should always remember that necessity knows no law, and if forced to break our rule we should not worry about it. The rule naturally falls under various heads of an annual, monthly, weekly, and a daily rule. This does not include our vacations, which will be spoken of in a different place; it refers to our seminary life alone.

THE YEARLY RULE.

To try to advance in the spiritual life, remembering that we are called to be saints, and especially as priests will have the example of holiness to set.

To obey our Bishops absolutely.

* De Ordine, lib. 1. Tom. 1, 545, B.

† Quoted from *Directorium Sacerdotale*, 2.

To obey, as far as may be, the professors in the seminary.

To be on hand at the beginning of the terms, and not without strong necessity to leave the seminary during term time.

If we are lay-readers, to spend as little time away from the seminary, as possible.

To keep Ash-Wednesday and Good-Friday as fasts, namely to abstain from all food and drink, except one meal after three o'clock, and a light tea.

To keep Lent, the ember days, rogation days, and all Fridays throughout the year as days of abstinence and special prayer.

To receive the sacrament on all Sundays and great feasts.

If possible, to spend some time in retreat, either in the autumn or spring, before or after term time.

If in the habit of going to confession, not to neglect the Easter confession.

MONTHLY RULE.

To try to set one day apart for prayer and meditation, making a sort of retreat, remembering always that it ought never to interfere with the school work.

WEEKLY RULE.

To receive the Holy Communion on Sunday, unless hindered by strong necessity.

To make a careful preparation for its reception, at least giving up an hour for that purpose, the preparation should include a thorough self-examination.

To keep Fridays as days of abstinence and special prayer; to abstain from flesh meats and luxuries.

To observe whatever holy days may occur.

DAILY RULE.

To rise early, not later than —, that we may have an hour for prayer, meditation, and reading before breakfast. To always attend Morning and Evening Prayer,

unless positively hindered, and any other religious services which may be provided.

To spend some time in meditation, and in reading some spiritual book.

Never under any circumstances to neglect private morning and evening prayer.

To attend the lectures and recitations, and prepare for them to the best of our ability.

To make a short self-examination on our besetting sin before going to bed.

To say Sext and Compline, or whatever other offices may be convenient.

To spend some time in recreation.

To go to bed sufficiently early that one will rise punctually at the appointed hour without feeling tired; on the other hand, not to indulge in a useless amount of sleep.

The more we can systematize our studies and follow a rule, the better, provided we do not let it become a tyrant; every man will have to make such a rule to help himself.

Ascetic Practices.

"But I keep under (*ὑποπιάζω*) my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away."*

This warning of St. Paul's comes with special force to us who are either studying to preach to others, or are preaching; and if the blessed apostle felt the need of discipline, in the midst of all the terrible trials and hardships which were inflicted on him by the heathen, and with the affliction, the thorn in the flesh, which was ever present by God's dispensation to "buffet" him, how much more do we need some self-inflicted discipline to help us keep under our body? There are some sins which can be cured in no other way, those sins of touch and taste and sight which our body is ever dragging us into, but even if we are not troubled by such temptations the Scripture certainly implies that there are powers to be gained only by such means. "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."†

Do we read of a single person who reached any degree of saintliness without subduing the flesh in some way or other by ascetic practices.

The first and most important of all is fasting; it is not something which we may practice to attain greater holiness, but it is something which we must practice even to hold the position of an ordinary Christian. Our Lord says, "Moreover when ye fast."‡ It is not a question of whether we fast or not, it is taken for granted that we will fast, as it is taken for granted that we will pray and give alms. They are placed on much the same level.

* 1 Cor. ix., 27.

† Matt. xvii., 21.

‡ Matt., vi., 16.

There seems to have grown up an idea of late years that to abstain from something—from eating butter, from eating candy, and things of that sort—is fasting; it is self-denial, and may be helpful in its way and degree, but it is not fasting.

Without exception, I think, every single passage in the Bible in which fasting is mentioned, either by the context or by the word used, means going without food, and going without food means being hungry and being uncomfortable.

It is absurd to say we won't fast because it gives us a slight headache or makes us feel uncomfortable. That is the very object of it. If we don't feel its effect on our bodies what good is it doing us? We have no right to make ourselves sick or to unfit ourselves for the work we have to do, but the danger certainly does not at present lie in that direction.

There are two days on which the Church demands of us a strict fast—Ash-Wednesday and Good-Friday. We should keep them just as strictly as we possibly can without breaking down—no food, no drink at all until well on into the afternoon (three o'clock), or, if anything, as little as possible—a piece of bread and some water, a piece of bread and a glass of milk. There is little, if any, excuse for a seminarian not keeping these fasts, unless he is lay reading. When you become priests you may have to break your rule, especially on Good-Friday if you preach the three-hour service.

Besides these days of fasting, the Church has appointed certain days of abstinence, the forty days of Lent, all Fridays throughout the year, the Ember and Rogation days. By abstinence is meant less food than usual, or less nutritious or pleasant food. The use of fish instead of flesh food, as being far less nourishing and less likely to arouse the animal passions, has the sanction of the whole Church. As regards Lent, each one is at liberty to make a rule for himself, no rule being put forth by our bishops. We should not seek to dispense ourselves more than is necessary. Any rule for Lent, which allows meat more than once a day, and none on Wednesdays and Fridays, is lax, unless a man be sick or

be holding services, and in the last exception, in most cases, we need not relax the rule. From Passion Sunday, or at any rate from Palm Sunday, no meat should be eaten.

Besides fasting there are those other means of discipline used by God's saints, not, like fasting, demanded of us by God, but which, if used with judgment or under proper direction, may be a great help to overcome sins of the body—sensuality and impurity—sins to which those leading a sedentary life are very prone. Jeremy Taylor has a wonderful chapter on the subject in his *Life of our Blessed Lord*: “Since, therefore, the body is the instrument of sins, the fuel and the incentive, our mortifications must reach thither also, at least in some degrees, or it will be to small purpose to think of mortifying our spirit in some instances of temptation.”* “But in the lesser degrees of mortification, in order to subduing of all passions of the sensitive appetite and the consequent and symbolical sins, bodily austerities are of good use, if well understood and prudently taken.”†

Sleeping on a very hard bed or on a board; saying a litany or prayers in some position that is painful, with outstretched arms in memory of our Lord's position on the cross; the use of the scourge, called by spiritual writers the discipline; the hair shirt or sackcloth next the skin, the catanella or chain belt, which is painful and irritating without being dangerous, provided the lighter ones are used; and other means about which those who desire can find out

It is very easy to call such practices mediæval, Roman, and childish, but let the man who is really trying to root out the sins of impurity, or who is thrown by his duty into the occasions of sins of the body, make use of such means and see if he is not helped.

That we hear little about such things is no proof of their not being used. It is the last thing a person talks about—the very mention of such a thing destroying the use for which it is intended.

* *Life of Our Lord*, I. viii. 13.

† *Life of Our Lord*, I. viii. 18.

It would be easy to prove a continual use of such means of discipline in the Anglican Communion, and certainly the consent of hundreds of saints ought to witness to their usefulness ; neither our temptations or our bodies differ from those of the men and women who have striven after high places in the Kingdom of God.

ARTICLES ON FASTING.

Jeremy Taylor's Life of Our Lord, Pt. II. xiii.
Holy Living, chap. iv. sect. 5.
Directorum Asceticum, Vol. II. 65.

ARTICLES ON CORPORAL AUSTERITIES.

Jeremy Taylor's Life of Our Lord, Pt. I. viii. 4.
Directorium Asceticum, Vol. II. 23.
Inner Life of Lacordaire, 329.
Growth in Holiness, 180.

Study.

"To say of any one that he is a priest is to imply that he is a man highly proficient in all sacred science," said S. Denis very early in the history of the Christian Church. Could it be said to-day? And S. Francis de Sales said, "Knowledge and piety are the two eyes of a good ecclesiastic;" and St. Paul, writing to the younger clergy, exhorts them to "Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine;"* and how dreadfully true is it of the unlearned priest that "If the blind lead the blind both shall fall into the ditch."†

Our seminary life is especially a time of study, of intellectual preparation. Every possible advantage should be taken of it, and after spiritual exercises every moment of time, except the hour or so a day needed for recreation, should be given up to study, and this study should be distinctly that of sacred things. Our college life has been passed in historical, scientific, and classical work, and later on in life we may devote a certain portion of our time to these studies, but in the seminary theology demands our entire time: three years is all too short for the veriest foundation in such a vast range of studies as theology embraces. "Make a resolution never to apply our minds to anything, no matter what it may be, unless we can be sure that the glory of God, the salvation of our fellow men, and our own sanctification will result from our study."‡

A writer on the ministerial life lays down the rules that our reading must be done: 1st. Piously, as S. Augustine says, "Jesus we seek in our reading." 2d. It must be methodical. "God is order," says S. Thomas. Everything that touches God ought to be done orderly; method will fix the time, the kind, and the manner of our read-

* Tim. iv. 13. † Matt. xv. 14. ‡ Dubois' Zeal in the Mins. 98.

ing ; it will prevent our studying simply for study's sake ; it will lead us to take careful notes of what we read. 3d. It must be done courageously, with the intention of knowing what the Church teaches on the subject, and with a willingness to go to any source to find out what that teaching may be, and to lay aside all prejudices. 4th. It must be done soberly. " On the chief branches of ecclesiastical learning procure a few first-rate books, standard works, so to say, and read them again and again, whilst others are engaged in running over a great number."* And we should always remember that " not to study," says a pious writer, " is to tempt God ; to do nothing but study is to forget one's vocation." As the writer of the *Imitation* says, " Learning is not to be blamed, for it is so good in itself, and, according to the order of God, only, one should always prefer a pure conscience and a holy life."

We hear people now and then say that piety is sufficient, but although in the priestly life and work piety is most important, for without it our work will amount to nothing, and without it we will lose our souls, yet, as Dubois says, " Piety does not supply the want of learning, and more, it is not even a true piety, a solid, an enlightened piety, if it does not inspire its possessor with a decided taste for theological learning."† He is speaking of ministerial piety.

Every seminarian knows that the work in the seminary course is not sufficient to occupy all our time, and that in some departments differing in the different seminaries, it is very unsatisfactory. In these we are left largely to private study and research. Two complete and very important branches of theology, moral and ascetical, are almost entirely neglected, and one dogmatic is so unsystematically taught, except in one or two cases, that we leave the seminary with an undigested mass of doctrine arranged in no sort of order, and frequently we know both ends and not the middle of a course of reasoning.

The trouble comes largely from the fact that we have

* Dubois, 103.

† Zeal in the Mins., 106.

not a satisfactory treatise on systematic theology. To read Pearson and Browne, and a half-dozen books haphazard on various doctrines is not to study dogmatic theology, and yet it is all most of our men do. Why not study some of the great Latin doctors? A man who will read S. Thomas, reading say the third part on the Incarnation, sacraments, and last things, his first year, the second part the second year, and the first part, which is the most difficult, on God, the last year, will have some sort of a systematic knowledge of theology. If he is asked what justification is, he will know, and know what relation it bears to God, to man, to the Incarnation, to the sacraments. How many men who usually leave our seminaries could answer such a question?

As regards ascetic and moral theology there is the same trouble, no satisfactory treatise. There is Sander-son on the Conscience, and Bishop Taylor's *Ductor Dubitantium*, both hard reading, and very unsatisfactory, especially the latter, for they give their own opinions, which is not what we want, but the opinions of the learned of the Church of all ages. With the growing practice of confession any priest may at any moment be called on to hear a confession, whether he teaches or believes in the practice or not. His penitent won't want his opinion on cases of conscience, but the opinion of the Church, which he ought to be competent to give. Pusey's translation of *Gaume's Manual* for confessors is all that we have in English, and that, on account of the discussion of the seventh commandment being entirely omitted, is not sufficient or satisfactory. Reuter's *Neoconfessarius*, but above all, Gury's *Compendium Theologicæ Moralis*, carefully studied, would give all that is absolutely necessary. A knowledge of ascetical theology is perhaps of even more importance to the average priest, whatever may be his school of churchmanship, and is so little affected by controversy it is a wonder it is not more studied; in all pastoral direction, instruction, and preaching, it is of such enormous help. Goulburn's books, Carter's *Spiritual Instructions*, Scaramelli's *Directorium Asceticum*, the centenary edition of S. Alphonsus' Ascetical works, now being published by

Benziger, New York. Faber's books, especially his *Growth in Holiness*, and *All for Jesus*, are the easiest books to get at on the subject in English.

This suggests the subject of the study and reading of Latin. It is curious what a dread most seminarians have of reading anything in Latin. We are always searching for translations. It must be largely a question of laziness. Nearly all our men are college graduates, and with very slight labor we can learn to read patristic or scholastic Latin fluently. If we only try we would find it far easier than we think. How vastly superior the English clergy are to us in learning, chiefly because they go to the originals, are not always getting their learning second-hand.

Another trouble with us is that we are all the time reading destructive or controversial works. We are learning nothing but negatives. What good does all this do us when we come to teach our people the Catholic faith, or practical piety? They want the truth. They want it dogmatically stated. They want a basis for faith and morals, not an eternal negative, a sort of Christian agnosticism. How much time we waste on the so-called higher criticism and on rationalistic exegesis, when the spiritual and mystical interpretations of the text totally neglected, perhaps laughed at by us, will help our people and give our sermons some color, warmth, and spirituality, will save souls. The whole question is well summed up by Jeremy Taylor: "Let every minister study the ancient canons of the Church, especially the penitentials of the Eastern and Western churches. Let him read good books, such as are approved by public authority; such as are useful, wise, and holy—not the scribblings of unlearned parties, but of men learned, pious, obedient, and disinterested, and amongst these such specially which describe duty and a good life, which minister to faith and to charity, to piety and devotion, cases of conscience, and solid expositions of Scripture, concerning which learned and wise persons are to be consulted. Let not a curate of souls trouble himself with any studies but such as concern his own or his people's duty; such as may enable him to speak well

and to do well, but to meddle not with controversies, but such by which he may be enabled to convince the gainsayers in things that concern public peace and a good life." *

In the end of the Priest's Prayer Book will be found a most helpful list of books, well classified, giving the school of theology of the writer, and if of primary importance so marked, or if to be read with caution. The marking in the first place is somewhat prejudiced in favor of books published by Masters, but the list is extremely useful in choosing books for a small library or for a certain branch of study.

* Jeremy Taylor, iii. 714.

Habits of Life.

OF S. Augustine it was said : " His attire was neither too elegant nor too homely." and of S. Bernard, " Poverty of dress was always pleasing to him, want of cleanliness, never."

How frequently we see the seminarian who seems to think of little else than his clothes and his toilet, with "banged" hair, waxed mustache, everything he has on in the very latest style, a veritable dandy ; if he is not totally lacking in brains, of which such habits are usually an index, he must have a very low conception of what he is at the seminary for, and of what he is going to be made when he leaves it. All such habits, which draw attention to the man, denote that he is filled with the sin of pride, and very far from the humility our Lord would teach.

The same thing comes out in a man's room. Let his room be cheerful and comfortable. It ought to be the place where most of his time is spent, but no matter how wealthy he is, he ought to avoid all appearance of luxury in the way of curtains and rugs and hangings and pictures and cushioned easy-chairs. Not only men of means, but men who have not money enough to buy proper books with, will fit out their rooms in the most extravagant style, carried away by the æsthetic craze of our generation.

A seminarian's room should bear the evidence of study, of a love of simplicity, and a hatred of worldiness, pride, extravagance, and show. What spare money he has had better go for books. When he becomes a parish priest there will be many calls for money, and he will in all probability be able to add little to his library.

The man who has good standard books of reference, which are usually costly, about him, will do fourfold

better work than the man who has not got them, all things being equal, for he will look up points as they come up. Especially a seminarian's room should be free from sensational and doubtful pictures, such as too often he brings from his college room, and his book shelves free from doubtful books.

A cross or crucifix hung in our room, ever before our eyes, often helps us to be recollected, and will frequently prevent other men saying and doing things which should not be said and done in a seminarian's room. That reminds us that there are the three T's to be mortified, as a spiritual writer puts it, the mortification of the tongue, of the temper, and of the table.*

MORTIFICATION OF THE TONGUE.

We all know the dangers which lie in the use, or rather abuse of it; there is hardly a commandment which we cannot break by word as well as by deed, but the divine teaching is still more strict: "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."† And again S. James says, "If any man offend not in word the same is a perfect man,"‡ and we know how that whole chapter of the Epistle is given up to the rebuke of sins of the tongue.

It would be impossible and useless to attempt here to treat the whole subject, but there are certain definite sins to be avoided which we can class under several divisions.

* Enchiridion Clericorum, 137.

It was suggested to me by a friend that I should give a few simple rules on etiquette and social behavior, some seminarians not having the advantage of such a training, others having grown careless during the college and seminary life, away from the refining influence of a home. It is certainly of the first importance that every priest should know how to act and behave like a gentleman under all or any circumstances; he will spoil his entire influence in many cases by bad, rude, or uncouth manners. I have not felt able to write such a set of rules, but would refer every seminarian to a small book, *Directorium Sacerdotale, A Guide for Priests*, by F. B. Valney, published by Benziger, N. Y., in English, for \$1.25, and containing a very full and complete set of such rules, together with a number of very helpful ritual directions, an excellent list of books, although from a Roman standpoint, and much that is suggestive about the spiritual life."

† Matt. xii. 37.

‡ James iii. 2.

First: Avoid, as S. Paul says, "foolish talking and jesting which are not convenient,"* that sort of thing which eats into our time and uses up our energy, and lowers us in the eyes of thoughtful men, and approaches very nearly to sin in God's sight.

Secondly: "Restrain your tongue from all raillery, bantering, sarcasm, pungent joking, in any way hurtful to the feelings of others. Remember the law of Charity—say nothing to any one or of any one which you would not like to be said to yourself or of yourself."†

Thirdly: Have an absolute abhorrence of the low joke or vile, filthy pun; you cannot be too strict; never so much as approach the border line of what is not decent, and immediately and always leave the presence of men who indulge in such conversation. The devil never lets us forget such a thing once heard, and Oh! the trouble it may give; don't turn yourself into devils to tempt other men.

Fourthly: Avoid being contentious, as opposed not only to the sacerdotal but Christian character. S. Paul warns us against it: "But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes, and the servant of the Lord must not strive."‡ Anybody can take exception to anything if they choose.

Fifthly: Beware of detraction, a besetting sin of the priesthood. Bossuet said to Louis XIV. about something else: "There are great examples for it, but greater reasons against it." Oh, that it could be said of each one of us, "No man ever heard a bad word from your mouth respecting another."

Sixthly: Don't talk about yourself. S. Paul says again: "For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth."§

What shall I talk about? What does a lawyer, or a student or a scientist talk about in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred—about his business, his hobby. "O homo Dei!" talk about God.

Hear S. Paul's advice to S. Timothy: "Let no man de-

* Eph. v. 4.

† 2 Tim. ii. 23.

‡ Enchiridion Clericorum, 139.

§ 2 Cor. x. 18.

spise thy youth; but be thou an example to the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."*

MORTIFICATION OF THE TEMPER.

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice, and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.† There is nothing which so shows an unmortified spirit as the exhibition of temper or impatience. The most marked characteristic of our Lord's life is gentleness, meekness, patience, especially during all the trials and humiliations of His passion, and we should follow the example of His great humility.

When we become priests and have parish-work we will meet many trying people, be placed in many aggravating circumstances; nothing will so add to our influence, increase our power, as perfect self-control. The man who never loses his temper has always the advantage, although his case may be weak or his ability to argue small. How often we see a priest who has lost all influence in his parish by some hasty exhibition of temper, striking a choir boy, turning some one out of the Sunday-school or out of a guild, hastily and unjustly; making remarks in an address which a few minutes after he would give all he possessed to take back. If he does not lose all his influence, how often he loses one of those precious souls committed to his charge and of which he will have to give account in the day of Judgment.

Let us begin in the seminary and learn to control our temper absolutely, and then when we are priests, with God's help we will be able to stand firm when we are tried.

MORTIFICATION OF THE TABLE.

May the wish of the Psalmist never come true in our case: "Let their table be made a snare to take themselves

* 1 Tim. iv. 12.

† Eph. iv. 31.

withal, and let the things which should have been for their wealth be an occasion of falling." *

It is certainly unseemly that a seminarian should be spending his evenings dining out and running perilously near to the sin of gluttony if he does not overstep the mark. This does not apply to ordinary social or friendly dinners, although we should always guard lest we spend too much valuable time in such things. All elaborate dinners and suppers, lunches, receptions, card and theater parties, balls, theatricals, and all such things which are distracting, take much time, and belong distinctly to worldly life, however harmless for lay-people, certainly should be given up by the seminarian. They are never conducive to godliness and a recollected life, and are frequently the proximate occasion of sin, either the sin of gluttony, drunkenness, or their fellows, impurity, pride, and slander. Even in his ordinary meals the man trying to mortify himself, "keep under his body," as S. Paul says, will not be dainty or over-fastidious; he will eat what is given him, and not find fault with everything because it is not served in such a manner as would please an epicure.

With regard to sleep, we ought also to be moderate, take only that which is needed for health; and we should rise at a given hour early enough before breakfast to give us ample time for our prayers and meditation. If we have the privilege of the daily sacrament, it is well to make our meditation before or after it, and we should plan for that in our rising. We should not sit up so late that we will be tired and unfit for work when we do get up; have a fixed hour for Compline and go to bed after it is said, or at any rate at as nearly a given time as possible; a holy life requires a regular life.

We should be careful to take sufficient exercise, but we should carefully guard against allowing any games or out-door sports becoming the end and object of our time; hour after hour spent in playing tennis when our studies are being neglected or our prayers forgotten, or as, alas! is sometimes the case, the offices of the church,

* Ps. lxi. 22.

neglected, is more than a venial fault ; it is perilously near being mortal sin.

The whole danger at present in seminary life is on the side of laxity, and there is little danger that we will draw too rigid rules for ourselves. Far better in these things to err on the side of rigor than on the side of laxity.

Lay Reading and Mission Work.

A PRACTICE has grown up, in our seminaries, of a large number of the men taking some sort of mission or lay work either under some city rector, or alone in some small country mission. The custom is bad in both cases as regards the men, but particularly bad in the last case, where it hurts both man and mission. It is not unusual to find missions which for years have been served by lay readers, who prefer a lay reader to a priest because they can get rid of him at any time, and can have a change and the excitement of a new man; they can also control a lay reader in the way they cannot do with a priest, and so they go on in this wretched state, never caring to call a priest, never trying to raise more than the few dollars necessary for a lay reader; the sacraments are irregularly administered, the Eucharist never more than once a month, and seldom so often; there is no one to baptize, or absolve, or administer the viaticum to the dying soul; there is no pastoral relation and care, and the system cannot be anything but destructive.

As for the man, what is the effect on him? Three years are certainly short enough time in which to make the proper spiritual and intellectual preparation for the priesthood; our seminary life certainly has sufficient distractions without a man leaving Friday afternoon not to get back until Monday noon, three days out of seven gone; besides, he comes back tired, worn out, and unfit for work.

His studies are neglected; a large portion of the time he has for private research and study is gone, and worse, far worse, often for weeks he is without the sacrament. He breaks in on his life of rule and prayer and recollection, and has a hundred distractions and worriments. Instead of absorbing and digesting what he hears and

reads he is continually pouring it out. Could anything be devised more likely to interfere with and destroy his spiritual and intellectual growth?

If the work be in the same town or city and under a parish priest, it is less harmful, but even then, if it is possible, he had better remain in his seminary.

What an anomaly it is to go into a seminary chapel on a Sunday or feast day and find a mere handful of men! The others are off, indirectly keeping people from the sacrament and staying away themselves.

It is indeed a vicious system, and unless it is absolutely impossible for a man to help having a part in it, for pecuniary reasons, he will always, after he has left the seminary, acknowledge he would have been far better out of it. He had better even practise a large amount of self-denial and have his time, his studies, his prayers, his sacraments uninterfered with.

Vacations.

THERE is no time so dangerous to the seminarian as his vacations; "For idleness hath taught much evil."* He gets away from the rule of the seminary life. He is very apt to be where there are few if any services, and where the sacrament is seldom or never administered. It takes great moral courage to keep up our spiritual exercises. We have perhaps nothing but a small, close, hotel room in which to make our meditations, read our office and say our prayers; silence is next to impossible, and we are usually away all day and come back at night tired out.

The only certain way of having an hour or so to ourselves is to get up early and spend the time before breakfast in prayer, reading, and meditation; this time is always our own, it need never interfere with our duty as guest or host, or with the plans that others may have for the day; our minds are clear and we can keep our thoughts on our prayers or reading. Later, a thousand things will come to distract us.

The vacation is usually a very long one, much longer than is really needed for rest; many men working far more than the average seminarian seldom get more than two weeks or at best a month. When there is so much study to be done, so much to learn, it seems almost wrong to spend the whole time in idleness. If two or three men can plan to spend a month together somewhere, even by the seaside or at the mountains, with a little self-denial they can accomplish a vast amount of most useful work. There are many books of lighter theology, such as biography and the lighter works on history, which require neither continuous reading nor application, and can be read with interest and profit in the warmest sort of weather. Miss Young's *Life of Bishop Patterson*,

* Eccl. xxxiii. 29.

Coleridge's *Life of Keble*, the *Life of Wilberforce* or *Dean Hook*, *Geikie's Hours with the Bible*, the *Lives of James Skinner* or *Charles Lowder*, any of *Sidney Lear's* biographies, the *Life of the Abbé Dupanloup*, or the *Curé d'Ars*, *Montalembert's St. Elizabeth of Hungary*, *Capecelatro's Life of Philip Neri*, or *Hutchin's St. Vincent de Paul*,—dozens of such books suggest themselves which are most easy and delightful reading and are of great help. If there is some branch of profane literature in which we wish to strengthen ourselves; or to keep up a knowledge of French or German, the vacation can be made profitable without necessarily interfering with a sufficiency of rest and recreation. All it requires is a firm will to do a certain amount of work.

While on our vacations we should always remember that the seminarian bears, especially with people belonging to the sects, who have naturally lax views of the ministry, a certain clerical character. A person not a churchman thinks he is much the same as a minister, and a well-educated churchman, remembering the dignity of the priesthood, thinks of what he is studying to be, and each requires, and rightly, more of him than of a simple layman. He should avoid scandal in every form, not go off on doubtful excursions, with doubtful company, not be seen sitting round with a crowd, listening to, or above all telling, doubtful jokes or stories. He should guard both his tongue, his eyes, and his temper.

Most important of all, he should be very careful in his intercourse with young women; he should naturally have made an absolute rule never to dance, and such a thing as flirtation should never be coupled with his name; whatever there may be for other persons, for the would-be priest there is no such a thing as harmless flirtations.

Then there is the great danger of the flirtation becoming something more serious, and the man who left the seminary in the spring full of lofty resolutions, with the intention of giving up his whole life to God's work and the salvation of souls, of leaving himself perfectly free to work when and how he pleased, perhaps with the half-formed resolution of leading the celibate life, returns in the autumn engaged, and what has become of

his zeal, his self-denying life, his fine resolutions, his half-formed vows? His future work has become a matter of dollars and cents; usually neither he nor his *fiancée* have any money of their own. Half the time, if you get at the truth, the man wishes he was well out of it; perhaps he does sneak out of his promise, to his own disgrace and shame, under some paltry excuse. My advice to the man would be that which a well-known priest, in an address at the General Seminary, said he gave to a candidate from his parish who came back in the autumn reporting such a state of affairs, "Well, you had better hunt around for some other business that pays better."

One other suggestion I would make: in choosing a place to spend the summer vacation, if possible go where there is a church near enough to have the help of the weekly celebration; so many of our summer resorts now have their chapel with a fair number of services.

Ordination and Beginning Work.

USUALLY before ordination there comes the question to each man, Where shall I work? What sort of work shall it be? Shall I give myself to work among the poor in one of our large cities? Shall it be mission work? Shall it be work in the city or in the country? In some cases the bishop exercises his right of sending his deacons where he pleases; then there is but one thing to do, to obey cheerfully and do our best in that sphere of work to which we are sent.

In most cases, however, the deacon either chooses for himself, or is consulted in the matter. We have a call from here and one from there, what shall we do? One thing seems certain: do everything in your power to keep from being left in sole charge of a parish, however small. The practice of having a deacon alone in a parish is bad from every stand-point,—bad for you, bad for the people.

The only logical position of our office of deacon is, that it is a time of trial and apprenticeship when we learn the practical or pastoral side of parish work, as we have learned the intellectual and theoretical side in the seminary. Otherwise, why not immediately advance a man to the office of priest unless he is to be a perpetual deacon?

To learn this practical side, to know how to treat the various difficult questions that come in the administration of a parish and in the cure of souls, as far as a deacon can deal with souls, he ought to be in a large parish under an experienced priest, who will direct, guide, counsel him, reprove his faults, help in a hundred ways to make

a useful priest out of him. How much harm is done to the deacon's character by being thrown untrained, untried on a parish alone ! It is apt to foster a spirit of pride, but more dangerous deceit of the devil ; a young deacon is so apt to work for numbers and show, it is his first work, he must make a good showing, and everything tends to that.

Have we not heard of a Bishop saying, "I will send Mr. N. to such a small parish, and we will see what he is good for" ? Alas ! for the souls in that parish and his own soul if *he* goes there with any such thought. If the effect of working alone is bad for the deacon, how much worse for the people, even if he don't make any grave mistakes through lack of judgment or experience. Where are the sacraments ? He can only administer baptism ; how often are his people's souls fed with the Bread of Life ? Only when by good fortune he can get a priest, seldom once a month, still more seldom on the great feasts, days of obligation.

Who is to administer the Eucharist to the dying, or to give the comfort and consolation of absolution to the penitent sinner ? It certainly looks as if we cared more for preaching than for sacraments.

Above all things, let the young deacon keep away from a purely worldly parish and from a worldly rector ; nothing is much more disastrous. He sees piety laughed at ; far better, a pious man of very different views from your own, than a man whom you agree with in doctrine, but who is unspiritual. Always let the priest you are going to work with know what your real opinions on doctrine and practice are. Don't go with a lie in your right hand, and lead a life of shuffling and deceit which will deaden all spirituality ; but always go with the intention of perfect obedience. As a deacon look upon your rector, as you ought always to look upon your bishop ; obey them or leave the parish or diocese. If any harm comes of your obedience, the fault is not yours. It is the most ultra protestantism to disobey your rector or bishop ; no good ever comes of it. I am not speaking of cases of conscience ; but be sure you don't exalt some piece of

ritual or some absurd individualism into a case of conscience.

As ordination draws near, the seriousness of what you are about to do comes over you. Try to be more recollected, try to withdraw from the world around you; if possible, make a retreat,—this privilege is now given to almost all students. Whatever may be your school of thought, you will never be sorry for having taken advantage of this great help. If you cannot attend a regular retreat, put aside at least one day and spend it in prayer and recollection.

I would strongly advise every man to go to confession before ordination. I think you will not be sorry. It is not an easy thing to do; it is never easy to humble ourselves, but it will be far harder after you are in orders. Theologians teach that the grace given in orders for aid in the work of the ministry,—not the character, or grace necessary to administer the sacraments or to bless, but the grace given to the individual for his own growth in holiness, and to help him resist the special temptations of the ministry,—is dependent on the reception of orders in a state free from mortal sin. You can only be certain of being in that state after having received absolution.

Receive ordination fasting. If at no other time, try at least then to receive the sacraments with proper dispositions both of soul and body. After the service is over, try not to be carried away immediately with the excitement, gossip, and fuss that always take place on ordination day;—kindly meant and harmless, but very distracting to those just ordained.

One last word: Remember two things: from the time of your ordination you are as a city set on a hill, whatever you do cannot be hid; it has a lasting effect for good or for evil. And in all trouble, sorrow, trial, and disappointment, remember our Lord's comforting words, among his last, to his Apostles before His passion, and which He repeats to every true priest: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your

fruit should remain ; that whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name He will give it you."* Let us ask Him for increased earnestness, zeal, self-devotion, humility, purity, holiness in us, his priests.

* John xv. 16.